

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,324,522 (hereinafter "Peterson et al."). The Examiner has also rejected claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Peterson et al.

More specifically, regarding the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the Examiner indicates that Peterson et al. discloses "an e-commerce support system comprising a web server to which each retailer makes an access via a terminal over a network ... a database storing data for required functions ... and an application server to establish each of the functions by using the stored data." The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's position.

Amended claim 1 defines an electronic commerce (or e-commerce) system that includes an e-commerce support system. The e-commerce system claimed in amended claim 1 has a shop server (1) provided on which is a shopping mall (2) including a plurality of virtual shops (2a) to (2n) (specification page 4, lines 33-35). The e-commerce system claimed in amended claim 1 also has a virtual-shop retailer system (11) having at least a terminal (17) provided for each of a plurality of retailers who own the virtual shops (specification page 10, lines 10-14). Furthermore, the e-commerce system claimed in amended claim 1 has an e-commerce support system (21) shared by the retailers (specification page 10, lines 15-16), which is connected to the virtual-shop retailer system via the Internet (specification page 10, lines 31-32), and, as seen in Fig. 3, includes a Web server (22), a database (24), and an application server (23).

As discussed on page 11, lines 21-35 of the specification, the e-commerce support system (21) offers the retailers with the functions required for e-commerce, where selecting the necessary functions to establish e-commerce for each of the plurality of retailers depends on each having the virtual-shop retailer system (11) having at least the terminal (17). For example, since the e-commerce support system (21) is shared by the retailers, the essential component for each of the plurality of retailers is only the terminal (17).

In other words, each of the plurality of retailers does not need to separately have and maintain other components, such as, the Web server (12), the database (14), and the application server (13), as discussed on page 10, lines 13-30 of the specification. The e-commerce support system (21) will offer to each of the plurality of retailers the functions associated with its components (*i.e.* the Web server (22), the database (24), and the application server (23)), and each of the plurality of retailers can borrow, as necessary, these functions to complete their own e-commerce system. Therefore, each of the plurality of retailers can establish their own e-commerce system easily by borrowing the necessary functions to do so from the e-commerce support system (21).

Peterson et al. does not disclose such a user-friendly e-commerce system. Instead, according to col. 1, lines 61-65, Peterson et al. is directed to “a process for integrating a maintenance supply network with an information network for selectively distributing information about inventory levels and pricing among vendors, and efficiently transferring inventory between parties according to prearranged terms.” As such, according to Peterson et al.:

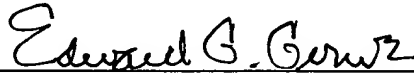
A plurality of vendors (distributors) of an item is provided with an information network for communicating among the vendors information about the quantity of the item each vendor has in inventory. Preferably, the price of the item as determined by each vendor for sale to other authorized distributors is also shared. Col. 1, line 65 to col. 2, line 4.

Thus, Peterson et al. does not disclose nor teach an e-commerce support system shared by a plurality of retailers, and connected to each of the plurality of retailers' virtual-shop retailer systems via the Internet, which offers each of the plurality of the retailers with the necessary functions to establish their own e-commerce system that depends on each having the virtual-shop retailer system having at least the terminal. Therefore, amended claim 1 is distinguishable from Peterson et al. Inasmuch as amended claim 1 is deemed allowable, claims 2, 3, and 4 depending therefrom are deemed allowable due to

their dependency. Reconsideration and the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance of claims 1-4 is thus earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain after this amendment, the undersigned attorney would welcome a telephone call.

Respectfully submitted,



Edward G. Greive, Reg. No. 24,726
Renner, Kenner, Greive, Bobak, Taylor & Weber
Fourth Floor, First National Tower
Akron, Ohio 44308-1456
Telephone: (330) 376-1242

Attorney for Applicants

May 26, 2004